Shifting of responsibility of storage of foodgrains

930. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to shift the responsiblity of storage of foodgrains to the State Governments;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to share the financial burden involved in storage of foodgrains by the State Governments for distribution through PDS; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (d) No, Sir. However, under the scheme of decentralized procurement introduced by the Cenral Government in 1997-98, the designated States procure, store and, also, issue foodgrains as per allotments indicated by the Central Government under PDS. This Scheme is being implemented by the State Governments of West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Uttaranchal.

The difference between the economic cost of the State Government and the Cenral Issue Prices is passed on to the State Government as subsidy. The economic cost also includes the storage charges incurred by the State Governments undertaking procurement under the decentralized procurement scheme.

Awareness of consumer rights

931. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the vast majority of the people are woefully ignorant of the existence of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 which protects their rights and interest;

(b) whether Governmnet have taken any steps to educate the public in the matter so as to make them aware of their rights and privileges;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard for safeguarding interests of the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISCTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (e) Continuous efforts are being made by the Government to make people aware of their rights as consumers and the forums available for redressal of their complaints against defective goods and deficient services. Awareness programmes through audio, video and print media have been undertaken and also proposed to be undertaken by the Government throughout the country for this purpose. Consumer awareness programmes are also undertaken by Voluntary Consumer Organizations (VCOs) for which financial assistance is available from the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF). Assistance was also sanctioned from the CWF for conducting awareness camps under the Jagriti Shivir Yojana in the country.

Movement of Foodgrains

932. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to remove restrictions on movement of foodgrains in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government propose to wind-up functioning of the Food Corporation of India; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U. V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) In order to facilitate free trade and movement of